

Tailored for Southeast Asia: Inside CJ BIO's Strategy for Microbiome Innovation

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As the demand for scientifically backed and culturally inclusive health ingredients increases across Southeast Asia, CJ BIO is strategically expanding its probiotic portfolio. The company is introducing BiomeNrich PRO G814 (*Bifidobacterium bifidum*) and BiomeNrich PRO G952 (*B. lactis*) to provide more targeted solutions for gut health, particularly addressing age-related microbiome challenges while complying with the diverse regulatory and dietary requirements of the region.

In an interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, SooHyun Paik, Business Development Manager at CJ BIO, discusses the motivations behind this launch, the clinically supported benefits of both strains, and how human-origin probiotics are shaping the future of functional foods and dietary supplements. With Halal and Kosher certifications and robust R&D support, CJ BIO is empowering its brand partners to innovate with confidence throughout Southeast Asia and beyond.

What motivated CJ BIO to develop and introduce these two specific *Bifidobacterium* strains at this time, and how do they align with your broader probiotic strategy in Southeast Asia?

CJ BIO has always been committed to delivering innovative ingredients to the market, and this philosophy has been the driving force behind the introduction of our *B. bifidum* (BiomeNrich® PRO G814) and *B.*

lactis(BiomeNrichâ€¢ PRO G952) strains in the global and the Southeast Asian market.

Southeast Asia represents a dynamic and rapidly growing market for health and wellness products, especially including probiotics, and we have identified the region as a key area of interest for meeting evolving consumer demands.

We have been already present in the market providing Lactobacillus-based gut health solutions in the market, and we saw an opportunity to further enhance our portfolio by introducing Bifidobacterium-based gut health ingredients.

This strategic addition allows us to provide dietary supplement or functional food manufacturers with greater flexibility and innovation in creating diverse and cutting-edge finished products.

These strains are included in the list of permitted strains across all regions in APAC and are recognised as GRAS (Generally Recognised as Safe), making them suitable for a wide range of applications, from dietary supplements to functional foods. By expanding our range, we aim to empower our customers to meet the unique needs of their consumers and differentiate themselves in the competitive market.

These Bifidobacterium strains are tailored to meet the specific requirements of the Southeast Asian market as they come with essential certifications such as Halal and Kosher, ensuring their suitability for the diverse cultural and dietary preferences in the region.

The certifications not only reflect our commitment to quality and inclusivity but also position our products as ideal solutions for Southeast Asia's burgeoning health and wellness industry.

By addressing the growing demand for innovative and culturally appropriate health solutions, we are reinforcing our dedication to innovation, customer satisfaction, and market leadership in this vibrant region.

Could you elaborate on the unique clinical or functional benefits of PRO G814 and PRO G952, particularly in addressing age-related microbiome challenges?

The general characteristics of Bifidobacterium bifidum include its ability to increase folate biosynthesis, utilise HMOs (Human Milk Oligosaccharides), and strongly adhere to the gut lining due to its natural properties. Published scientific studies have shown its benefits in improving defecation discomfort, stool frequency, abdominal pain, skin immunity, and even cognitive function.

The general characteristics of Bifidobacterium animalis subsp. Lactis include strong resistance to acid and bile, which enhances its survival rate through the human gastrointestinal tract. This probiotic is commonly found in fermented dairy products, and published scientific evidence supports its effectiveness in alleviating defecation discomfort, irregular stool frequency, and abdominal pain.

With both strains being human-origin, how does that influence their performance or compatibility in the human gut compared to non-human-origin strains?

BiomeNrichâ€¢ PRO G814 and PRO G952 are human-originated probiotics that offer distinct advantages in terms of their performance within the human gut compared to non-human-origin strains.

As these strains are naturally found in the human gastrointestinal tract, they exhibit superior survivability and functionality in this environment.

Specifically, PRO G814 and PRO G952 demonstrate high levels of acid and bile tolerance, enabling them to survive the harsh conditions of the stomach and reach the intestines alive.

They have exceptional adhesion capabilities, allowing them to effectively colonise the intestinal lining.

This ability to establish themselves within the gut microbiome is critical for influencing and reshaping the microbiome composition, ultimately contributing to improved gut health and overall well-being.

Bifidobacterium species are unique in that they are exclusively found in the intestines of humans and animals.

As they cannot be easily supplemented through regular dietary intake, the importance of consuming bifidobacterium strains through supplementation has been gaining more importance.

How important were certifications like GRAS, QPS, Halal, and Kosher in your formulation process, particularly for serving diverse consumer bases in Southeast Asia?

CJ BIO places a strong emphasis on providing reliable and scientifically validated ingredients to its partners and consumers.

Status such as GRAS (Generally Recognised as Safe) and NDI (New Dietary Ingredient) in the United States, along with QPS (Qualified Presumption of Safety) from Europe's EFSA, play a pivotal role in establishing the safety and credibility of our products.

These are reviewed by highly respected regulatory authorities in the U.S. and Europe, not only validate the safety of our ingredients but also enhance their acceptance and trustworthiness in other regions worldwide.

By meeting these rigorous standards, CJ BIO ensures that its ingredients are not only safe but also globally recognised, making them ideal for use in diverse markets.

This commitment to safety and scientific validation underscores CJ BIO's dedication to delivering high-quality solutions that meet the evolving needs of consumers and brand partners across the globe.

In Southeast Asia, certifications like Halal and Kosher are particularly significant. They are not merely marketing tools but essential requirements for catering to the diverse cultural and dietary needs of consumers in the region.

By ensuring that BiomeNrich's PRO G814 and PRO G952 meet these standards, we position them as truly global ingredients that can be confidently used across various markets.

Moreover, these certifications allow us to support not only local businesses in Southeast Asia but also customers who export their products internationally.

With these credentials, we can confidently present PRO G814 and PRO G952 as robust gut health solutions that meet the highest standards of safety, quality, and inclusivity.

Can you share any insights into the clinical research or scientific validation behind these strains and how they support gut health across different life stages?

Bifidobacteria is a probiotic of profound importance throughout the human life cycle as its presence in the gut microbiome plays a critical role in health and disease prevention across different life stages.

During infancy, the increase in gut Bifidobacterium levels through breastfeeding has been shown to have significant, lifelong impacts on disease susceptibility and overall health.

Bifidobacterium is most dominant during infancy, accounting for up to 90 per cent of the gut microbiome. However, its prevalence declines sharply with age, dropping to approximately 10% in adulthood and nearly 0% in old age.

Even in healthy adults, the composition of Bifidobacterium strains varies. Strains such as *B. longum* and *B. adolescentis* tend to dominate, while others like *B. bifidum* and *B. lactis* are less prevalent, leading to reduced strain diversity.

This decline in diversity underscores the growing importance of supplementing Bifidobacterium to maintain a healthy microbiome and support overall well-being.

The scientific validation behind Bifidobacterium strains emphasises their ability to address these age-related microbiome challenges.

By increasing strain diversity and supporting the gut microbiome, these strains contribute to improved gut health across all life stages, from infancy to old age.

Their role in promoting a balanced microbiome is increasingly recognised as essential for maintaining health and mitigating the effects of ageing.

Looking ahead, how does CJ BIO plan to support brand partners in incorporating these strains into functional foods and supplements, both in Southeast Asia and globally?

CJ BIO is dedicated to supporting our customers in creating innovative and effective health solutions.

While we specialise in providing high-quality ingredients for functional foods and dietary supplements, we also have the capabilities to assist our brand partners with formulation and even finished product development.

Leveraging our extensive R&D capabilities, we collaborate closely with our partners to deliver products that meet consumer needs and expectations.

Additionally, one of our key strengths lies in offering trusted, scientifically proven branded ingredients.

By incorporating branded ingredients such as PRO G814 and PRO G952, our partners can create products that stand out in the market and resonate with consumer demands for reliability and efficacy.

To further support our partners, we offer samples for application testing during the initial stages of product development.

This ensures that our ingredients integrate seamlessly into their formulations and meet the desired functional and sensory

requirements.

Our commitment extends beyond simply supplying ingredients; we strive to grow alongside our customers, fostering mutual success and innovation.

Looking ahead, CJ BIO aims to continue empowering brand partners in Southeast Asia and globally by providing not only high-quality ingredients but also the tools, expertise, and collaborative support needed to create impactful functional foods and supplements.

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